

Streets and Maintenance

This is my first newsletter entry since taking over Streets and Maintenance.

First, I would like to share a little background. We have slightly over 11 miles of streets within the community. Most of our streets were installed in the mid-1970's, and age, heat, and weather take a toll on the asphalt over 40 years. Our annual repairs have varied from complete removal of the asphalt and base with total new roadway (as the gatehouse entry last year and Meadowlakes Drive from Firestone to the Clubhouse about 10 years ago) to seal-and-chip (as we did on many streets over the past several years). New roadway gives us a 25 years plus life expectancy; seal-and-chip is estimated to increase life expectancy by 4-7 years. Our budgets vary, but we spend about \$150,000-175,000 annually for roads maintenance. That is about 50% of your annual POA fees.

In many cases, our “maintenance” is really more a matter of correcting original design issues – much of it related to water runoff. And, we still have some of those issues, as the water flows on Chaparral, Turkey Run, and at Firestone and Meadowlakes Drive.

We are working with the City to prepare a plan for assessing the condition of our roadways, prioritizing repairs, and correcting water flow issues. We have asked the County roadway official to provide us a professional's assessment of the condition of our streets (including water flow alternatives), and his opinion of the approximate costs and priorities. At this time, our assessment is that most need of repair is the main artery for traffic from the Clubhouse to Mahan and our other main “rework” is the water flow down Chaparral. We will have the County roadway professional's opinion before committing resources to either project.

We are also planning for the repair of the exit roadway at the gatehouse and the roadway owned by the POA outside the gate. We have considered widening the exit lanes and replacing current asphalt with concrete as completed last year at the entry. Widening the exit lane will increase the speeds of exiting vehicles, and it will increase traffic risks in front of the gate and at intersecting streets and businesses.

We will finalize the 2015 maintenance plan over the next few weeks and post the plan at City Hall.

Speeding on Meadowlakes Streets

One of the most common issues addressed to the POA and the City continues to be controlling “speeders” on our streets. Meadowlakes prides itself on the family friendly environment of our community. We do not have sidewalks – pedestrians share the roadway with traffic. We do not have golf cart lanes – they also share the roadway. And, just as we need pedestrians and golf cart operators to exercise good judgment, we need drivers to follow the rules for all of our sakes.

The speeding problem in Meadowlakes is not big, in terms of numbers of drivers. Speed monitoring shows that over 85% of drivers are within one-mile of the speed limit. And, 97% consistently drive below 30 MPH. While the rule is 30 MPH, the risk is the 3% driving above 30 MPH on our streets – the speeders. Regrettably, the real risk is that it is our residents that are speeding – not visitors. And, the speeding occurs at similar times and on the same streets. An apparent conclusion is that the same, rather small numbers of residents are putting us at risk.

Traffic studies show that most drivers ignore posted speed limit signs and drive at a rate they consider convenient, reasonable and safe under existing conditions.

Traffic engineers highlight the 3 “E”s for overcoming this driver tendencies and reducing speed on residential streets:

- 1. Engineering: “Engineering” would require us to severely modify our streets to add chicanes, curb extensions, medians, rumble strips, roadway texture, etc. Repeatedly, we receive requests for more stop signs or more speed bumps/humps to slow the traffic at specific points. Professional traffic engineers have shown that neither signs nor humps are effective outside of about 150 feet. And, they do increase risk and delay for emergency vehicles.**
- 2. Education: “Education” would be most appropriate for the 3 % that place us most at risk, and**
- 3. Enforcement: “Enforcement” would have us identify the habitual violators, and address the violations.**

We are looking at alternative education and enforcement approaches to catching the small number of “speeders” on Meadowlakes streets that put our community and children at risk, without adding more engineering obstacles that disrupt safety and the majority of residents who do follow the rules.

Come meet with the POA Board each month with your input and suggestions.